

REMARKS

The claims have been amended as needed so as to take care of the formal matters raised by the Examiner in the Official Action.

Reconsideration is respectfully requested, for the rejection of the claims as unpatentable over TANGHE et al. and in view of HIATT et al., TUNC and ARAKI.

In addition to the arguments made in the preceding amendment, it should be pointed out that TANGHE et al. discloses a method wherein the acetic anhydride quantity is 8.57 mols/mol of anhydroglucose, which leads to a one-step production of cellulose triacetate. This explains why the method disclosed by TANGHE et al. requires a further step of hydrolysis of the cellulose triacetate initially produced for obtaining final products having various degrees of acetylation.

HIATT et al. discloses a method for preparing cellulose sulfoacetate which is very distinct from the claimed method, since HIATT et al. carry out the acetylation reaction in non-acid conditions.

Furthermore, TUNC discloses a two-step method which is completely distinct from the one-step method which is now claimed, since according to TUNC, the sulphating and the

acylating reactions are performed through two distinct process steps.

In contrast, the claimed method allows carrying out the sulphating and the acylating reactions simultaneously.

Finally, ARAKI discloses a method for obtaining cellulosesulfoacetate wherein the desired degree of acetylation can be obtained by controlling the temperature parameter of the acetylation reaction.

In contrast to the methods disclosed in the prior art cited, the claimed method allows the production of cellulose sulfoacetate in one step through a precise control of both the acetic anhydride/anhydroglucose ratio and the esterification temperature.

It has been found according to the invention that a one-step method for producing cellulose sulfoacetate of the desired degree of acetylation is obtained by combining a ratio of acetic anhydride/anhydroglucose of about 3.2, and an esterification temperature of about 40°C.

This combination of essential parameters of (i) the excess of acetic anhydride and (ii) the esterification temperature is not suggested to those skilled in the art by any of the prior art references cited. Furthermore, this essential combination of parameters is no more taught to those skilled in the art by any combination of the prior art references cited. In

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particular, it should be underlined that, since every prior art reference cited relates to methods that are very distinct, one from each other, then:

- those skilled in the art would have found no motivation to combine these references; and
- those skilled in the art had combined these documents, they would not have arrived at the claimed method involving this original combination of parameters.

As the claims now in the case bring out these distinctions with ample particularity, it is believed that they are all patentable, and reconsideration and allowance are respectfully requested.

The Commissioner is hereby authorized in this, concurrent, and future replies, to charge payment or credit any overpayment to Deposit Account No. 25-0120 for any additional fees required under 37 C.F.R. § 1.16 or under 37 C.F.R. § 1.17.

Respectfully submitted,

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